

1 ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

2 The present invention relates to the formation of an ILD layer while preventing or
3 reducing oxidation of the upper surface of a metallic interconnect. Avoidance of oxidation
4 of the upper surface of a metallic interconnect is achieved according to the present invention
5 by passivating the exposed upper surface of the metallic interconnect prior to formation of
6 the ILD. In order to avoid the oxidation of an upper surface of an interconnect during the
7 formation of an ILD layer, an *in situ* passivation of the upper surface of the interconnect,
8 immediately prior to or simultaneously with the formation of the ILD, layer avoids the
9 problems of the prior art.

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